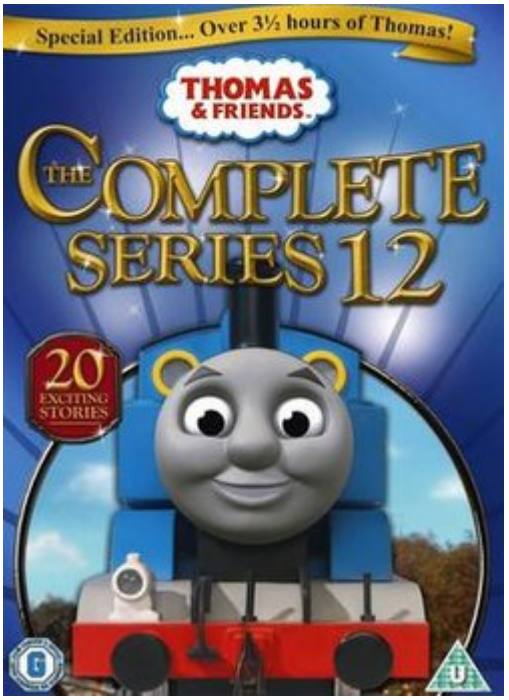
Thomas & Friends (Season 12)

Season 12 of Thomas & Friends premiered on October 26, 2008 and ended on November 2, 2008. The season premiere is "Thomas and the Billboard" and the season finale is "Best Friends".



The downfall of a classic

Why This Season Sucks

1. The CGI/model hybrid was poorly executed. The Maya CGI animation for the faces on the engines and the people and animals is badly done and looks very jarring when put together with the model environment.
2. Sharon Miller was promoted as head writer in this season and abused the series very badly.
3. The writing has been dumbed down to appeal to preschoolers. In the show's earlier years, the writing appealed to a general audience.
4. Many of the characters have gotten flanderized. For example:
   - Thomas has gone from a charmingly cheeky and optimistic protagonist to a clueless idiot who is too darn happy all the time, never follows any direction he is given by Sir Topham Hatt or other characters and constantly causes confusion and delay.
   - James has gone from a vain and boastful, yet hardworking and useful engine to a complete narcissist who constantly boasts about his paintwork.
   - Edward and Toby have gone from old and wise engines to paranoid wimps. Actually, Edward's flanderization started in Season 11 and Toby's started in Season 9.
   - Henry has gone from a somewhat arrogant, yet kind and friendly gentle giant to a worrisome coward who gets scared by the smallest things.
   - Emily went from being a nice, caring, and friendly engine, to a flawless Mary-Sue.
   - Duncan wasn't his usual stubborn self at all, (apart from the episode, "Push Me, Pull You")
   - Peter Sam is a moron
5. Like in Seasons 7-11 and 13-16, Michael Brandon's narration for the US dub wasn't well received. While he did have some bad parts to his narration, he enjoyed his job anyway.
6. Also, like in Seasons 7-11 and 13-16, Michael Angelis' narration for the UK dub wasn't well received either.
   1. The Fat Controller/Sir Topham Hatt no longer sounds drunk
   2. Percy and James' voices are no longer squeaky
   3. Angelis forgot to do Henry's voice which no longer sounds deep
7. Some of the characters (most notably Duck, Donald, & Douglas) are pandered in here to make the Classic fans happy for a few seconds and nothing else. Which it's told as very disrespectful to long time fans who really like the Classic era.
8. Many of the episodes are extremely repetitive and reuse the same formula over and over again. One type of formula that's constantly reused in these seasons is the "Three Strike" formula, which is where a character does something wrong three times before realizing his or her mistake and puts things right.
9. This season has little to no connection to the previous seasons.
10. Some of the episodes are mediocre, such as "Don't Go Back", "Saved You!" and "Push Me, Pull You".

- They can also be boring.

11. This is by far the weakest season of the model era.

Redeeming Qualities

1. This season is kind of special because it is the last season in the show's history to use live-action models and for the narrator to voice the characters.
2. Some decent and/or good episodes, such as "Percy and the Bandstand", "Duncan and the Hot Air Balloon" and "Best Friends".
3. Brilliant cinematography that's a step up from previous seasons.
4. The Maya CGI animated faces on the engines are actually well aligned.
5. Good lip syncing.
6. At least Sir Topham Hatt, Percy (until Season 15), Bertie, Lady Hatt, Miss Jenny, Jack and the construction crew, Stepney, Duck, Oliver and Toad are unflanderized.
7. Preschoolers can actually enjoy this season and it’s writing.

Reception

Season 12 wasn't well received by many fans and critics because of Sharon Miller's promotion as head writer for the series, the writing quality being dumbed to appeal to a much younger audience and the flanderization of the characters. However, many consider it to be better than Seasons 13-16, which are widely hated.

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